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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY,
MARCH 3, 2003

1. This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for March 03, 2003. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICS, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

2. MILITARY ATTACHES TURNED AWAY AT BORDER (Milliyet/Hurriyet) Military attaches, Daniel Bates and Joseph Collins from the American Embassy in Ankara and 50 American soldiers, were stopped by Turkish security forces in Cizre and were told to return. The attaches drove to Diyarbakir in vehicles belonging to the American Consulate in Adana, and later settled in the Dedeman Hotel. Reportedly the Attaches will go back to Northern Iraq once they receive necessary documents from the American Embassy. The American soldiers returned to Incirlik.

3. ORDER TO RETURN (Hurriyet/Dunya/Turkiye/Radikal) Civil trucks at the Iskenderun port which were carrying American military vehicles, were preparing to go to Eastern Turkey yesterday when they were held at the gate upon orders from Ankara. American officials came to the port to hold a meeting on March 1, after the Turkish parliament voted against American troops using the country as a base in case of a possible war with Iraq.

4. SECURITY MEASURES IN MEDITERRANEAN (Milliyet/) Strict security measures are being taken in the eastern Mediterranean region especially at the ports of Iskenderun and Mersin that America wishes to use in a possible war against Iraq. In Iskenderun, it is prohibited to approach within 200 meters of vessels. A similar ban is being applied to fishing boats in Mersin and Tasucu.

5. EX-MAYOR SUPPORTS LOCAL PRESS (Bolge/) Yuregir ex-Mayor, Omer Topcu, took action by demanding reform on the new bid law that has brought the local press to a halt. Topcu sent letters to members of the commission who prepared the law and to ministers of Adana. In his letter, Topcu states that the law has given a blow to the organs of the local press since it came into effect in January 2003. Topcu also stated that this new law takes a large portion of bid advertisements from local newspapers and transfers them to the official newspaper, which is not read by the public at large.

6. NEW BRIDGE TO HABUR (Dunya) A new bridge is under construction at the Viransehir- Kiziltepe section of E-90 that connects to the Habur border gate. It is reported that E-90 is an important route in terms of military transportation to the border. Officials note that the old bridge is too high and its columns cannot support heavy vehicles.

7. NO TO WAR, ISOLATION AND OHAL (Evrensel) Solidarity and collaboration with Prisoner Families Association (TUHADER), made a press announcement in Diyarbakir saying 'no' to war, isolation of PKK/KADEK leader Abdullah Ocalan and 'no' to a return to possible OHAL (state of security). The president of the association, Mahmut Bayhan, said they will continue to support peace, brotherhood and freedom. Bayhan noted the possible war that has been escalated by America is a potential threat

to Turkey and to the region.

ECONOMIC AND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENTS

18. PARLIAMENT DECISION IS WRONG SAYS GUNSIAD
(Dunya) President of SouthEastern Industrialist and Business Association, Bedrettin Karaboga, made an announcement regarding the decision of the parliament not to let American troops use bases in Turkey. Karaboga said that Turkey needs to protect its interests by not separating itself from America, economically or politically. Karaboga also added that the decision would adversely affect the Turkish economy and political structure, since Turkey is dependent on America in terms of economics and politics.

19. PEOPLE BEGIN STOCKING FOOD
(Sabah) Silopi and Cizre are provinces that border Iraq. In the gulf war of 1991, people in these regions were unable to find food, and therefore, this time they are preparing for a possible war by stocking fundamental food items such as flour, oil and cracked wheat. Bekir Sahin, who runs a flour factory in Silopi says that they are having difficulty supplying flour due to the increased demand. He also notes that their work capacity increased 10 times. As such they are working 24 hours a day to catch up.
HOLTZ